

# Newsletter

Spring 2009

## Train Smart!

Are you getting the results you want from the training you deliver?

Training courses are often a welcome change of gear for your staff, encouraging them to reassess their working methods and learn new skills, but do they really get the most out of them?

To maximise the return on your investment in training, it's not enough for HR simply to send people on courses.

Line managers need to prepare participants before they attend, telling them why this course is suitable, what is expected of them, and what will happen afterwards.

Follow-up sessions will help to embed the learning and ensure that your objectives are met.



## Web-watching...

Every month in 2009 our website will be focussing on a different key business issue, starting with Maintaining Staff Morale. Check out [www.chris-elgood.co.uk](http://www.chris-elgood.co.uk) for our latest tactics and training suggestions...



## NURTURING GENERATION Y

Who are Generation Y and why are they a significant group for management and learning specifically? Christine Elgood of Elgood Effective Learning interviewed leading specialist in this field, Benjamin Chaminade, to find out more...

### *CE Why is Generation Y such a hot topic?*

**BC** GenY are defined as those born between 1978 and 1994, and have been described as versatile, individualistic, impatient, indecisive, curious, and inventive. Many are bright and enthusiastic individuals who want to be involved and contribute. They bring a lot to the party. As a large proportion of the world's demographic are under 30 years old, businesses have to think seriously about marketing to the younger generation and how to attract, engage and retain the younger workforce who will become key to a post-recession future.

### *CE So what's different about how we communicate with them?*

**BC** As they spend a lot of time on the internet, surfing, playing sophisticated online games, 'FaceBooking' and chatting with their friends, Generation Y'ers develop good relating and reasoning skills but can be easily distracted. We find it best to use short visual presentations and to make any activity as practical as possible. They want to be involved and to have a say in what they want and how it should be designed or implemented.

### *CE What does that mean for training interventions?*

**BC** More than ever a blended learning approach is essential, with a high content of practical activity. Gen Y like to get on and do things, be kept busy, have variety and use their multi-senses and multi-intelligences as far as possible. So it's less 'tell' and more 'try it and see'. We are seeing more and more participant-led activity, with individuals sometimes being involved in the design too. So plenty of management games and simulations are recommended for sure!

### *CE How can we best nurture Generation Y as they are still sizing up the career landscape?*

**BC** Well there is a lot to cover on this topic, but one thing to remember is that GenY enjoy working with their friends and colleagues so anything that enables them to maximise these networks and to bring out their creativity would be a plus. Change management, leadership development, customer service, talent planning and gaining competitive advantage all seem to be hot topics when it comes to leveraging the skills of Generation Y.

For more information on Generation Y visit [www.generationy20.com/en](http://www.generationy20.com/en)

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effective learning for  
Improved performance

## Finetune your HR Strategy during the downturn

With the future looking uncertain, the issue of effective people management has never been more pressing. When cash is king, business owners are forced to focus on driving revenue whilst controlling costs.

HR professionals have a vital role to play in ensuring that the organisation is nimble enough to deal with short term issues, yet will still thrive when the upturn comes by retaining talent groups and high performers.

Offering strategic alternatives to job cuts, and helping senior management to engage with staff at all levels are key.

Ron Koprowski, Executive Vice President of The Forum Corporation, warns *'your best staff are by far the most poachable, particularly if staff are feeling nervous and overlooked'*<sup>1</sup> so it's essential for HR to work with senior management to nurture and retain talent.

Communication is vital - your most committed staff are also the ones who contribute fully to the success of your organisation, and research<sup>2</sup> shows they thrive on regular, specific feedback from their employers.

And don't forget your principles, there is an enormous amount of kudos to be gained in hard times by behaving honourably. Supporting good work practice, transparency, work-life balance, fairness in dispute resolutions, and balanced performance appraisal are all positive strategies which will reap benefits.

## 6 WAYS TO IMPROVE MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

### 1. Make every person count

Make sure each staff member feels rewarded, engaged and culturally included.

### 2. Keep them happy

Don't forget that great results can only be achieved by competent and driven staff. Woo and nurture them as you would a new customer.

### 3. Foster a spirit of camaraderie

Build team spirit by taking a team to a pub quiz, or organising a bowling trip. It doesn't have to cost a lot to be effective.

### 4. Communicate lots and well

Facilitate Q and A sessions, minimise uncertainty where you can, and make sure you tell staff that you appreciate their efforts and loyalty.

### 5. Incentivise creatively

As pay deals are reduced, look to continue the learning and development that people value, and offer more flexibility around working hours.

### 6. Make sure your staff are adequately trained

A recent survey<sup>3</sup> showed that 7 out of 10 employees were asked to perform tasks without receiving appropriate training, and the most frequently cited of these tasks was people management. Build commitment and confidence by addressing your employees' training needs.

*'Engaging the workforce is one of the biggest levers you can pull to improve the performance of your business'*<sup>4</sup>

**Do you really know what motivates your team?  
Ask us about Teamwork, the game that unlocks your team's potential. Call us on 0118-9821115 or email [ros@chris-elgood.co.uk](mailto:ros@chris-elgood.co.uk)**

<sup>1</sup> Personnel Today, September 2008

<sup>2</sup> BlessingWhite's 'State of Employee Engagement 2008' research, reflecting interviews with HR and line leaders, as well as survey responses of 7,508 individuals.

<sup>3</sup> Skillsoft survey of 6,100 employees from the US, UK and Europe

<sup>4</sup> Cranfield School of Management research 'The Impact of the Investors in People Standard on People Management Practices and Firm Performance' [www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/news/resources/IIPMikeBourne.pdf](http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/news/resources/IIPMikeBourne.pdf)

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